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LETTER DATED 2 NOVEMBER 1993 FROM THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

As members of the Security Council are aware, I issued a statement in Addis Ababa on 23 October 1993 condemning the coup d'état in Burundi and expressing concern over the situation in the country and solidarity with and support for the people of Burundi. Furthermore, I asked Under-Secretary-General James O. C. Jonah to travel immediately to Burundi as my Special Envoy on a good offices mission to facilitate the return of the country to constitutional rule. Mr. Jonah had occasion to brief the Council at its informal consultation on 1 November 1993 on the substance of his good offices mission to Burundi.

When my Special Envoy arrived in Bujumbura on 27 October 1993, the military had returned to barracks and most of the surviving members of the Government including the Prime Minister had taken refuge in the French Embassy compound. Neither the Government nor the army were exercising power and authority in the country.

My Special Envoy held three lengthy meetings with Prime Minister Sylvie Kinigi and several of her Ministers in the French Embassy compound. They informed him that the coup d'état was continuing and that they had no intention of resuming their functions until an international force - about 1,000 strong - was deployed in the country to protect them and to ensure that the army returned to barracks. They made it clear that they no longer had any confidence in the army. They believed that the entire army was involved in the coup which resulted in the assassination of President Melchior Ndadaye and a number of ministers and governors. They also maintained that the army was continuing its massacre of Hutus and had plans to eliminate all the ministers and Hutu intellectuals, and called for a complete disbandment of the present army and its total reorganization. They further requested for the deployment of an international force to protect strategic installations and institutions in the country.

My Special Envoy stressed the importance for the Government to re-establish its authority and explored with the Prime Minister and the Ministers how best the international community could assist in this task. He pointed out the difficulties for the United Nations to assemble peace-keeping forces for ongoing operations and noted that their request for a large international force would not be considered realistic.

Following his talks with the Government, my Special Envoy held a long meeting with the Army Command. The commander of the army stressed that the army had returned to barracks and assumed no responsibility for governing of the country. He asserted that the army was ready to respond to all decisions emanating from the Government through the Minister of Defence. The commander maintained that the coup was a putsch carried out by a small group from the army. He emphasized that the majority of the army was loyal to the Government and that many soldiers had lost their lives protecting the late President. He rejected the deployment in Burundi of an outside force, from the United Nations or from elsewhere, to protect the members of the Government or strategic installations and institutions in the country.

As one of the confidence-building measures, my Special Envoy suggested the appointment by me of a Special Representative who would facilitate the restoration of constitutional rule. This suggestion received general support during his discussions in Bujumbura.

My Special Envoy also met with other interested parties including members of the opposition who had contested the last election, representatives of the African Group (Egypt, Rwanda and Zaire), the European Community and the United States. All of them stressed the grave danger facing the country, and urged my Special Envoy to make all possible efforts to ensure that the Government assumed its authority without delay.

The fact that the situation was far from ideal and would remain critical until the Government exercised full control over the country was confirmed to my Special Envoy during his extensive surveillance of the country by helicopter. He witnessed the total breakdown of governmental authority in the provinces with many towns and villages deserted, many in flames and hundreds of thousands of the people of Burundi fleeing to neighbouring countries.

On the basis of his exchange of views with all concerned, my Special Envoy was able to offer a number of suggestions to the Government. He stressed the importance for the Prime Minister and the Ministers to leave the French Embassy compound and to resume their responsibility of administering the country. The Prime Minister confirmed to my Special Envoy during their third meeting on 29 October, that the Government had re-established its authority but that it would continue to operate from the French Embassy compound.

It will be recalled that in the statement issued on 25 October 1993 (S/26631), the President of the Security Council requested me to monitor and follow closely the situation in Burundi in close association with the Organization of African Unity (OAU). I wish to inform the members of the Council that in a communication dated 29 October 1993 addressed to me, the Secretary-General of OAU, Mr. Salim Ahmed Salim, forwarded to me the full text of the communiqué issued at the end of the Regional Summit held at Kigali, Rwanda on 28 October 1993 on the situation prevailing in Burundi. The Summit brought together the President of Rwanda and the Prime Ministers of the United Republic of Tanzania and Zaire. Also participating were Mr. Salim Ahmed Salim and a representative of the current Chairman of the OAU, President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt as well as two Ministers of the Government of Burundi.

In the communiqué, the Summit, among other things, requested me in consultation with the OAU Secretary-General, to set up an international force for confidence-building and for stabilizing the situation in Burundi, to be composed of forces drawn essentially from African countries chosen in consultation with the Government of Burundi. The communiqué also noted that some of the countries participating in the Summit had expressed their immediate availability to be part of the international force and appealed to the international community to provide material, technical and financial assistance to the force.

I intend to hold consultations with the OAU Secretary-General on the situation in Burundi with a view to exploring the areas of cooperation with the OAU. In the meantime, I intend to appoint a Special Representative for Burundi to follow developments and to continue the consultations and the coordination with the OAU.

I should be grateful if you would bring this letter to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(Signed) Boutros BOUTROS-GHALI